



Amo Amarone (I Love Amarone)

Tuesday, March 11, 2008

Reception Wine: 6:00 PM, Formal Tasting: 6:20 PM

Toronto Board of Trade (4th Floor), 1st Cdn Place,

(Entrance off Adelaide St. between Bay & York)

Members' Fee: \$66

Guests/Non-Members Fee: \$76

Deadline for payments: March 7, 2008

Amarone (next to Barolo and Barbaresco) has become one of the most coveted Italian wines. Over the past several decades, wine drinkers have become accustomed, and in some cases seek out, wines with powerful ripe fruit that are densely layered, with hints of coffee, leather and raisins. Produced in the region of Veneto by estates that make Valpolicella, the three principal grapes used are Corvina (which typically supplies the body, colour and perfume), Rondinella (providing the tannins and the floral), and Molinara (contributes the acidity and distinct aromatics). Unlike the typical Valpolicella, which are medium weight and meant for consumption within the first 3-5 years, Amarone is more robust and can easily be consumed over the course of 7-15 years. Amarone is Valpolicella's big — make that very big — brother. While Valpolicella is often simple and easy-drinking, Amarone is robust and demanding. To create it, winemakers dry the grapes for several months, traditionally on straw mats, until they shrivel up, reduced to a small, concentrated amount of juice. The vintners ferment this powerful extract until it is bone dry. The result is, like any great wine, hard to describe — but here goes.

Amarone has plenty of rich black-cherry flavour, sometimes scents of cedar or tobacco on the nose and hints of rich, dark soil in the taste. Yet despite its power, Amarone has a surprising elegance, finesse and complexity — a swirl of edges and angles in your mouth. When swallowing, you discover the wine's awesome fruit makes you forget how very dry it is. It has a result of clean and lovely in the mouth with the acids priming your senses for food and more wine.

For the most part, the production of Amarone has remained relatively unchanged since the 4th century. The grapes are generally picked between the last ten days of September and the first week of October, ensuring the grapes are fully ripe. Then the grapes are dried (or raisined) in special drying lodges or chambers, where they are either spread out on mats or strung up from the ceiling. Of course, each producer varies the drying period to help produce his/her signature Amarone. After drying, the grapes are pressed and fermented dry; then they are aged in wooden casks (again some producers experiment with new casks or a combination of old and new). The final product is a wine with a deep, bright colour, with an intense aroma of cherry, red currants, chocolate and spices, well-structured, with a layer of elegance. There may be a hint of tartness or astringent edge to these wines — Amarone is derived from the Italian word "amaro" (bitter).

Interestingly, Hannibal Lector from the novel *Silence of the Lambs* consumes the census taker's liver with fava beans and a "big Amarone", rather than the Chianti as mentioned in the film. Of course, this wine club does not endorse or encourage such a pairing! Try it with game birds instead.

We will be tasting 8 Amarones from top tier producers. See overleaf for a list of the wines and brief tasting notes. This promises to be another unforgettable tasting and we expect tickets to sell quickly so don't delay in registering.

HOW TO REGISTER

You must now register for tickets online at www.onlineregistrations.ca/tvcevent3/. You have the choice of paying by credit card or mailing in a cheque after you complete the online registration form. Ticket sales with a credit card are guaranteed as soon as payment is processed; reservations by cheque are not final until your payment is actually received. After March 3rd, only credit card sales will be accepted.

You will be sent an email confirmation once you have completed your registration. If you do not receive your confirmation, please contact torentovintners@onlineregistrations.ca

If you haven't renewed for 2008, then this will be the last event notice that you will receive from us. We value your support and don't want you to miss this year's great line-up of wine tastings so please click on <https://www.onlineregistrations.ca/torentovintner> to renew for 2008.

TORONTO VINTNERS CLUB INC.

THE WINES

1. Lorenzo Begali Amarone Della Valpolicella Monte Ca'bianca, 2001, DOC \$79

Aromas of prune, raisin and lightly polished oak follow through to a full-bodied palate, with firm tannins and lots of flavor. Long, long finish. Best after 2007. Score - 91. (www.winespectator.com Aug. 31, 2006)

2. Tenuta Sant'antonio Campo Dei Gigli Amarone Della Valpolicella Classico 2000 DOC \$69

Deep red. Nose of ripe black fruits, pepper and chocolate. On the palate, the velvety, spicy black fruit flavors are joined by grilled red meat and balsamic accents. The tannins, currently a bit pronounced, need some time to round out. But this wine shows real complexity and power. Score - 92. (Ian D'Agata, International Wine Cellar, March/April 2006)

3. Zenato Amarone Della Valpolicella Classico Riserva Sergio Zenato Selection 2001 DOC \$89

Minerally and intense on the nose, with clean aromas of currant, dried spice and mineral. Full, tightly packed palate, with big velvety tannins and a long finish. Best after 2008. Score - 92. (Jo Cooke, www.winespectator.com Sept. 30, 2006)

4. Quintarelli Valpolicella Classico Superiore 1999 DOC \$75

"The champion this year is the splendid Valpolicella Classico 1999, mouthfilling and velvety, it gives gamey, warm aromas rich in red berry fruit and so aristocratic you would almost think it was an Amarone. All in all, it's a peerless, starry wine that won our tasting panel over unreservedly and was awarded Three resounding Glasses." Score - 3 Glasses (out of 3). (Gambero Rosso Italian Wines, 2007)

5. Cesari Bosan Amarone Della Valpolicella 2000 \$75

Cesari's Bosan Amarone is a big, dense, layered wine with an aroma profile of prune, sandalwood, dark chocolate and root beer tones. It is full-bodied, very flavourful and long finishing with smooth, velvety tannins. Very enjoyable tonight with big meat dishes or put it in the cellar for up to five years. VINTAGES PANEL

6. Dal Forno Valpolicella Superiore 2002 \$118

Dal Forno's 2002 Valpolicella is a massively endowed effort revealing backward dark fruit, new leather, spices, herbs, roasted coffee beans and toasted oak on an imposing, tannic frame. Made in a super-concentrated style - even by Dal Forno's standards - it will require several years of cellaring for the tannins to soften somewhat, although it is hard to imagine that will ever completely happen. Beginning with the 2002 vintage Dal Forno's Valpolicella is made from 100% dried fruit, whereas in previous vintages the wine had been made only partially with dried fruit. Anticipated maturity: 2010-2017. Romano Dal Forno is a humble, down to earth and extremely passionate person. Just a few minutes with Dal Forno are enough to understand his unwavering, some might say obsessive, pursuit of quality. I have never met a producer with such a maniacal approach to cleanliness in the cellar. Nothing is wasted here. Score - 93. Antonio Galloni, Oct 2007. Drink 2010 - 2017 eRobertparker.com # 173 Oct 2007

7. Masi Campolongo Di Torbe Amarone Classico 2001 \$85

This limited-production Amarone is the top bottling from the famous Masi estate. Very similar to the excellent 2000 version. It's built in the same style, with well-behaved fruit and very interesting iodine sensations mingling with Mediterranean sc-rubland. The progression is steady and gradual as the light, harmonious palate develops. Score - 2 (out of 3) (Gambero Rosso Italian Wines, 2007)

8. Masi Mazzano Amarone Della Valpolicella Classico 2001 \$93

The 2008 Gambero Rosso Italian Wines guide awarded this Amarone its highest rating. Production for this wine is very limited and it is made only in the finest vintages. Aged for three years in oak and a further six months in bottle, this Amarone presents a bouquet of violets, vanilla, plums, candied fruit and cocoa which resound splendidly on the full-bodied palate and linger on the long finish. Enjoy with red meats, richly-flavoured foods and strong cheeses or let this beauty mature in your cellar for 10 -20 years. Score - 3 (out of 3) (Gambero Rosso Italian Wines, 2008)